

Roundhouse Notes

Paducah Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
March 2012

All in the details

Stop and smell the roses.that is a term we have heard all of our lives. How many of us do this when rail-fanning? We usually wait trackside for the big flashy engine and the sleek cars to come barreling down the track so that we can get that perfect picture or video. Have you ever thought about “stopping and smelling the roses” while rail-fanning? What I mean by this is looking for details that you might not otherwise notice. I recently took a trip in some parts of Paducah looking for just that, details. I visited the area over by H.C. Mathis drive and north 8th street areas. The line that comes out of downtown past the lumber yards and into the weeds (it ends not too far west from where I started.)



Looking at maps this appears to be part of the old “mud line” that went from Paducah to Wickliffe. I stared looking around and noticed the details. There was no train



coming just bugs and weeds. I wondered when the last time this part of the railroad had been used. Judging by the amount of



sand and gravel in the flange ways on the road crossing, it has been quite some time. I was afraid to wander too far into the weeds for fear or ticks and such.



I then meandered over to where the lumber cars that come in on the FUPD end up. There was a full car waiting to be unloaded sitting on a small spur and many loads already on the ground. So I took a few close-up views of marking on lumber cars and other trackside details.



I then took a trip out to Chiles Jet and the Bobo road crossing and caught a BNSF empty coal train heading North on the



Edgewood cutoff. While there I noted the details again. A stop sign at the crossing an emergency sign and a crossing bolt. While these “details” may not seem as exciting as a full speed freight train bearing down on you, they are an important part of railroading.



How many have noticed what year the dates are on the 2 viaducts the cross Jefferson and Broadway? If you look at the abutments of those same viaducts you can tell that the track could have been double track if it needed to be. This is just a start of my adventures for details in Paducah I soon venture more towards South side as time permits. My favorite railroad sign on South side is the “Old Walmart switch” indicating that it is located near where the old Walmart was across the beltline.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Bob Johnston

“MISSION” STATEMENT AND DISCLAIMER

As we change editors, it seems an appropriate time to review how NEWS AND VIEWS came about and is written. Many years ago, I was asked by then Editor Paul Frey to write a column for the ROUNDHOUSE NOTES, as I was then the President, and later was asked by Logan to continue writing it after he became President. I try to include all local railroad news that I know about, such as P&L, CN, BNSF, VMV, P&I, Progress Rail, and any general local R.R. news. In order to fill space (anyone who has written a column will understand), I also look for area wide and national railroad news that pertains to our local situation, or impacts our local railroads and industries, or that I think may be of interest to readers (at least it is to me). My sources include personal observation, the internet, magazines, newspapers (including the classifieds), conversations with rail fans, railroad employees and officials, and anything else I can find. TRAINS NEWS WIRE is particularly helpful. Some months there is a lot to write about, and some months, not much. In some cases I interject my opinions or assumptions (thus VIEWS). As I have stated previously, I welcome and solicit suggestions, criticisms, and any help in finding news. Feel free to contact me (bobj31@comcast.net) or Editor, Charles Gibbons.

PADUCAH & ILLINOIS: Extensive track work has been underway for several weeks on the P&I between Paducah and Chiles Junction, and as is this is written, a track curfew is in place on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from 0600 to 1500. A continuous rail train has dropped welded rail and approximately 20 pieces of MOW equipment have been working to install it and pick up the old. The crossings at Clark St., Pines Road, and Central Avenue have been rebuilt, and probably the other grade crossings will be also. The rail train, which usually ties up on the CR-Central Ave. passing track, is

pulled by I.C. SD -70 1019 still in its original black paint. It is one of the last 20 (1000-1019) new locomotives purchased by the I.C. in 1995, and they were also the first new power purchased since 1975. The 1019 was painted at VMV. All have DC power, and were purchased from EMD on the “back end” of a Norfolk Southern order (Some days there have been two trains, one with CN power and the other with the aforesaid IC 1019)In other P&I news; reports are that the Kentucky Department of Highways will soon install crossing gates at the Pines Road crossing at an approximate cost of \$ 300,000.00. This project was announced several years ago, but never materialized.

RESTORATION OF I.C.G, GP-8: The Bluegrass Railroad Museum in Versailles has announced plans to restore I.C. GP-8 7738. The locomotive now in “pumpkin orange,” will be put back in orange and white, and when completed, would be the only Paducah rebuild still operational in those colors. Many of the original Paducah rebuilds are still in service around North America, but in different colors. The 7738 was built in 1953 as Reading 610, was rebuilt in Paducah in 1975, and later worked for the Mississippi Delta R.R.; it was donated to the museum by R. J. Corman, and is in service on the museum’s rail line. Chad Cowan, who was formerly a member of the model train club, and who now lives in Owensboro, visited the museum with his family for “Little Obie,” and says he is helping with the project.

EMD/CATERPILLAR/PROGRESS: As previously reported, on January 1st, EMD locked out the 460 workers at its London, Ontario plant in a dispute about drastically lowered wages, and later announced the plant would be permanently closed. In a recent development, TRAINS NEWS WIRE announces that EMD, a division of Caterpillar, has reached an agreement with the union to provide severance pay to each worker of three weeks wages for each year worked, and pickets have been taken down. The plant’s work will be moved to plants in

the U.S. (Muncie, IN and Mayfield, KY) and Mexico

At the same time that this was going on in Canada, EMD/Progress Rail was holding a job fair in Muncie to interview for positions there. Response was so overwhelming that it was cut short after 3000 to 4000 job seekers showed up, but the company announced they would hold a “follow up,” fair on March 3rd.

In a related story, in late January, the Muncie plant released demonstrator, SD 70Ace 4223, which is the first EMD locomotive built for domestic use in the U.S., since LaGrange built a unit for METRA in 1992. Other units have been built there for export. The 4223 was shipped to the EMD engine plant in LaGrange.

“PADUCAH” FINDS NEW HOME: Iowa Pacific Holdings has acquired several passenger cars and locomotives from short line, Carolina Southern, including two F units and former Illinois Central observation car, *Paducah*, originally built as a coach, and then rebuilt as an observation car in 1997. Ed Ellis, CEO of Iowa Pacific (which also owns a number of other railroads and railroad related industries) is a native of Paducah and is an I.C. fan. Ellis already owns several other pieces of I.C. rolling stock which he operates on his passenger railroads, in new chocolate and orange paint. Another of Ellis’s holdings is tour operator High Iron Excursions, and he was a passenger on the High Iron passenger special that visited Paducah last year.

VMV: The usual assortment of GMTX reporting marks (part of the General American Locomotive Leasing Group), many of them GP 40s; there were two SD 38’s, 3253 & 3254, from the Ohio Central, and a GP 40 GMTX 3005, still in CSX blue and grey paint; several former Oakways still lingering around including GMTX 9041, also an occasional switcher, including GMTX 73 in new blue paint. The unusual looking QUBE 1102 is still hanging out behind the tank shop for the 2nd month.

PROGRESS/MAYFIELD: Not much information from there either. The METRA contract should be about completed. There was an internet report of MTBX 1066, PRLX 425, 428, and 430 being delivered from CSX in Louisville consigned to Mayfield, and there have doubtless been others not reported. There was also a reported sighting of GMTX 3300, Gardendale Railroad, and GRD 3803, both believed to be GP 38's headed for there.

NEW INDUSTRY BEHIND VMV: Driving down South 16th Street, you may have noticed work on some of the smaller old Paducah Shops buildings, and some of the stored locomotives in that area have been moved further away. The land has reportedly been purchased by Shoreline Steel, for a relatively small facility to make steel pilings. 13 employees are anticipated. It was originally planned to have gone on Pool Road, but complaints from one neighbor forced a move. No info at this time about how rail transportation will be involved.

P&L: No official announcement on the exact date of movement to the new building, but reports are that some are already working there. Hopefully, there will be an Open House for the public at a later date.....Evidently contract track work will be getting underway along the P&L, as in February, classified ads ran in the Paducah SUN advertising for "Track Laborers to work on a 3 month project starting in Paducah and ending in Louisville." The positions pay wages of "\$ 12/hr. & are very labor intensive," (i.e. hard). The company involved is Atlas Railroad Construction, L.L.C., a large railroad construction company that has been in business since 1954, and was recently acquired by Rail America, Inc.

MUSEUM: Thanks to a lot of work by a lot of people, the museum was ready for the official re-opening on March 2nd, and "Little Obie," on March 3rd. The partition/dividers are in place, the equipment in the rear portion of the museum has been moved to give better access to the simulator, and part of the windows have been covered to reduce glare on the simulator and provide additional display space, most of the rear walls and floors have been repainted with our "trademark," grey, and Bill Wood has spent hours re-tuning and adjusting the two vintage

Western Union railroad clocks, and both are running and keeping perfect time. Most significantly, the Maxfields have spent countless hours installing the locomotive simulator. It works wonderfully, and has many levels of possibilities, but as usual, we need more volunteers to be trained to supervise and operate it.

LITTLE OBIE: The miniature train event was a huge success with almost perfect weather. We had certain count of 248 adults and 198 children, but we know some children were not counted, plus many people rode the train only, did not tour the museum, and thus did not pay, and were not counted; so we believe, conservatively, that around 500 people rode the train. There were lines all day for the train ride, the simulator experience, and the model train display, but no one was heard complaining, the children were excited, and everyone seemed to have great time. After deducting the advertising and other costs, we did not make a great deal of money, but it should make us proud that in these difficult economic times we provided such inexpensive (or free) pleasure for so many people. Of course, it was through the courtesy of the Canadian National Railroad who provides the perfectly maintained and immaculate train and two man crew, who take it all over the CN System in the U.S. Two more trains cover Canada. Our special thanks to Mark Schmale of the CN, who works with us so well, and thanks to all of the chapter members, and Paducah Model Train Club members, who showed up to help. Pat Beadles, a friend of the Alveys, collected at the front door, and kept a list of the visitors, a tremendous job. It would not have been possible without all of you.

CP-CN BATTLE: The January NEWS & VIEWS mentioned the desire by a new major stockholder of Canadian Pacific R.R. to hire CN's former CEO, Hunter Harrison, to run the CP. Since that announcement, an ugly battle has developed between CN, Harrison, the current CP Board and President, (who don't want Harrison) and the new major stockholder equity group who is trying to get control of the CP board. This fight seems destined to be of long duration, similar (but maybe worse) that that between the Children's Fund Equity Group and CSX, several years ago.

ANTRAK v. CN: I reported in January that the trip Ann & I took in December on the "City of New Orleans," which is operated over and by CN was on time both ways. That is apparently not always the case because TRAINS NEW WIRE reports that on January 19th, Amtrak filed a "blistering," petition to the Surface Transportation Board urging that that agency investigate how CN has been wantonly delaying Amtrak trains in violation of the 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act. The petition specifically mentions 2212 delay minutes in a 13 mile stretch around Champaign, IL; delays to three Chicago-Port Huron Blue Water trains; and delays to "Lincoln Service," train #307, and the "Illini" train #393 by two CN freights whose crew went "dead." It is unusual for Amtrak complaints to go this far. Historically, they have been handled informally between the passenger line and the freight railroads.

PROGRAM: John Maxfield will have a program on the Bullet Trains in Japan, where he used to live. This will be a great opportunity to learn first hand about something we have heard a lot about, but most of us don't really know much. The program will be at our regular meeting. Tuesday March 13th at 7pm in the 2nd floor meeting room of the McCracken County Library. Bring a guest.

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Published monthly by the Paducah Chapter,
National Railway Historical Society. Send your
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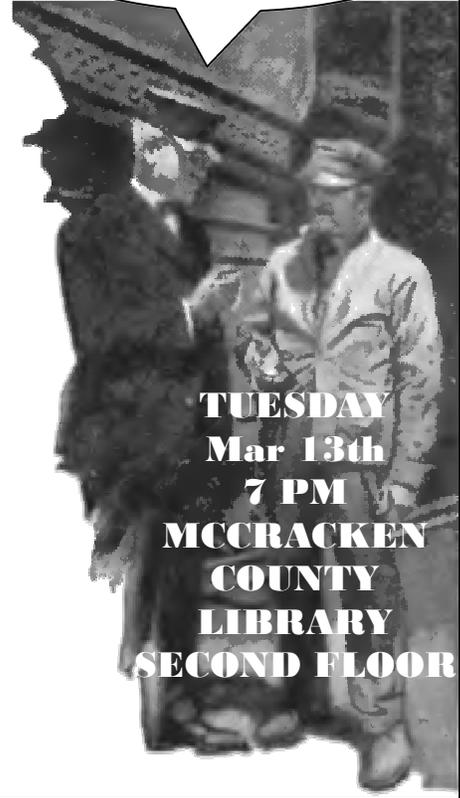
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Gosh! Its almost time for the meeting! We sure don't want to miss it.



**TUESDAY
Mar 13th
7 PM
MCCRACKEN
COUNTY
LIBRARY
SECOND FLOOR**

Rail replacement along the P&I at Central Ave. Photo by the Paducah Sun

Roundhouse Notes
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OVER THE HUMP!
The Big New Reason Why Freight Is Moving Faster and More Dependably Across Great Northern Railway

Here comes this year's apple crop from the State of Washington

EMPIRE BUILDER

GRAND NORTHERN RAILWAY